

## Sickle Force <sup>(1)</sup>

Force Headquarters <sup>(2)</sup>

15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade <sup>(3)</sup>

Headquarters, 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The Green Howards (Alexandra, Princess of Wales's Own Yorkshire Regiment)

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry

1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The York and Lancaster Regiment

15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade Anti-Tank Company <sup>(4)</sup>

148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade <sup>(5)</sup>

Headquarters, 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade & Signal Section

1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Leicestershire Regiment

8<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Sherwood Foresters (Nottinghamshire and Derbyshire Regiment)

### Force Troops

51<sup>st</sup> (Westmorland & Cumberland) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery <sup>(6)</sup>

71<sup>st</sup> (West Riding) Field Regiment, Royal Artillery <sup>(7)</sup>

260<sup>th</sup> (London Transport) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery <sup>(8)</sup>

168<sup>th</sup> Light Anti-Aircraft Battery, Royal Artillery <sup>(9)</sup>

231<sup>st</sup> Battery, 58<sup>th</sup> (Duke of Wellington's) Anti-Tank Regiment, Royal Artillery <sup>(10)</sup>

55<sup>th</sup> Field Company, Royal Engineers <sup>(11)</sup>

687<sup>th</sup> Artizan Works Company, Royal Engineers <sup>(12)</sup>

189<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps <sup>(13)</sup>

'A' Company, 146<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps <sup>(14)</sup>

'A' Company, 158<sup>th</sup> (Welsh) Field Ambulance, Royal Army Medical Corps <sup>(14)</sup>

36<sup>th</sup> Field Hygiene Section, Royal Army Medical Corps <sup>(14)</sup>

15<sup>th</sup> British General Hospital, Royal Army Medical Corps <sup>(15)</sup>

34<sup>th</sup> Field Hygiene Section, Royal Army Medical Corps <sup>(15)</sup>

21<sup>st</sup> Mobile Bath Unit, Royal Army Ordnance Corps

## NOTES:

1. 'Sickle Force' was formed from elements from the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division. The General Commanding Officer (G.O.C.) was Major General Bernard Charles Tolver PAGET, D.S.O., M.C., *i.d.c.*, *p.s.c.*, who was appointed on 20 April, from his position as G.O.C. 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. Before that date, the force commander was Brigadier (Acting) Harold de Riemer MORGAN, D.S.O., the commanding officer of 148<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade.
2. The force headquarters was formed by Headquarters, 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division.
3. The 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade was a pre-war Regular Army formation, which was part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division stationed at Catterick in Yorkshire. The brigade was deployed to France with the division, arriving on 6 October 1939. On arrival, however, it came under command of G.H.Q. B.E.F. and I Corps until returning to divisional control on 30 December 1939. It was detached from the division on 16 April 1940 and placed under War Office control. The Commanding Officer of the Brigade, Brigadier BERNEY-FICKLIN, was injured in an aircraft crash whilst preparing to sail to Norway. The command of the Brigade fell, therefore on the senior battalion commander within the Brigade, namely the commanding officer of the 1<sup>st</sup> Bn. The King's Own Yorkshire Light Infantry, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert Edward Fitzroy SMYTH, M.C., *p.s.c.*. Major E. E. E. CASS, M.C. assumed command of the battalion in SMYTH's absence.<sup>1</sup> SMYTH was fifty-three years' of age, one of three brothers who had all joined the Army. He had commissioned in the Oxfordshire and Buckinghamshire Light Infantry and had served in Mesopotamia and Russia during the First World War. The Brigade arrived at Andalsnes in Norway on 23 April 1940 and immediately came under command of 'Sickle Force'. It withdrew from Norway on 1 May 1940, returning to the United Kingdom where it rejoined the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division after it had been evacuated from Dunkirk.
4. This brigade was a pre-war Territorial Army formation that was part of the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division. The headquarters of the brigade was based in Nottingham. The 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Leicestershire Regiment was based at Loughborough, the 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Sherwood Foresters at Derby, and the 8<sup>th</sup> Bn. at Newark. The 1<sup>st</sup>/5<sup>th</sup> Bn. The Sherwood Foresters left the brigade on 29 October 1939, transferring to the 18<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division. It was replaced by the 2<sup>nd</sup> Bn. The South Wales Borderers, which transferred in from Londonderry. The brigade was earmarked for service in Norway, with the 2<sup>nd</sup> S.W.B. being detached and deployed to Narvik with the 24<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade (Guards), whilst the other two battalions formed 'Sickleforce'. The brigade had come under War Office control on 5 April 1940. It landed at Andalsnes on 18 April, and came under command of the Norwegian Army the following day. With the arrival of the Headquarters, 'Sickle Force', the brigade came under command on 26 April 1940. Ill trained and under equipped for this type of warfare and the conditions experienced in Norway, the brigade suffered badly. The remnants were evacuated back to the U.K. on 30 April. The brigade never rejoined its parent division, remaining in the U.K. while the rest of the division went to Iceland. In 1942, it reorganised as a training brigade in the U.K. responsible for the pre O.C.T.U. training of all officer candidates.

<sup>1</sup> Accounts of the Norway campaign refer to Lieutenant Colonel SMYTH as holding the rank of Brigadier, but the Army List shows him remaining in the rank of Lieutenant Colonel.

5. When each Regular Army mobilized in September 1939, each brigade was required to form an anti-tank company. The 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Brigade (Guards) did so with effect from 1 September 1939. Most appear to have done so by requiring each of the three battalions in that brigade to provide one platoon. A Major usually commanded the company, with a second-in-command. The company consisted of three platoons, each commanded by a subaltern. Each platoon had two gun detachments, equipped with Hotchkiss 25 mm anti-tank guns. Having served in France, this brigade had formed a brigade anti-tank company prior to landing in Norway. The company fought at most, if not all actions during the campaign, and in particular, is mentioned during the fighting at Kvam.
6. This regiment was formed in 1920 by the conversion of the Westmorland and Cumberland Yeomanry. It was based at Carlisle where the H.Q. and 370<sup>th</sup> Batteries were located, with the 203<sup>rd</sup> Battery being based at Whitehaven. This regiment did not go to France as it was earmarked for service in Norway so remained in the U.K.. The 203<sup>rd</sup> Battery was deployed at Narvik. The Regimental Headquarters and 370<sup>th</sup> Battery were due to arrive in Norway on the 28 or 29 April 1940, but it appears they did not arrive before the evacuation was ordered. After Norway, the regiment joined the 46<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division in July 1940, but left the U.K. in November 1940, to sail for Egypt. On arrival, it came under command of the 6<sup>th</sup> Australian Division for Operation Compass. Later it served with the 70<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division and transferred to the Far East, where it served as a Chindit Column.
7. This regiment was designated for service with Sickle Force, but on 27 April, it was shown as 'Not yet embarked' and it is believed it never reached Norway.
8. This battery was detached from the 84<sup>th</sup> (Middlesex, London Transport) Heavy Anti-Aircraft Regiment, Royal Artillery. Raised in 1938, this regiment had its Headquarters, 260<sup>th</sup> and 261<sup>st</sup> Batteries based in Willesden, London NW10. 262<sup>nd</sup> and 263<sup>rd</sup> Batteries were based at Arnos Grove. In April 1940, the 260<sup>th</sup> H.A.A. Battery was deployed to Norway to land at Aandalnes in Norway. Six of their 3" guns were lost at sea, as was all the battery's transport. The other two 3" guns were damaged in unloading and did not see action. The battery was evacuated from Aandalnes on 30 April to return to Scapa Flow and then rejoin the regiment. The regiment left the U.K. in November 1942 for North Africa. Later, it served with 8<sup>th</sup> Army in Italy, until placed in suspended animation in November 1944.
9. This battery was detached from the 56<sup>th</sup> (East Lancashire) Light Anti-Aircraft Regiment. Another battery was landed at Namsos with the Regimental Headquarters and the third battery being deployed to Narvik. This battery arrived at Aandalnes on 19 April and 21 April. Although all the guns were landed, only half the predictors were landed. One troop of this battery travelled seventy miles up the valley to join the front line.
10. A battery from of the 82<sup>nd</sup> Anti-Tank Regiment, which was under command of the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division, was earmarked for service with Sickle Force. The 231<sup>st</sup> Anti-Tank Battery was ordered to mobilize and proceed to Glasgow, where it embarked on ships bound for Norway. The ships sailed on 18 April, but were turned around when close to Norway to return to the United Kingdom. No elements of this regiment landed in Norway.
11. This field company was part of the 5<sup>th</sup> Infantry Division, but attached to the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade. It left France with that brigade and travelled with it to Norway.
12. Although earmarked for service in Norway, this unit did not arrive there before operations ceased and the evacuation took place.
13. This field ambulance landed on 19 April 1940, and opened a Main Dressing Station at Aandalnes shortly after landing. It was the only field ambulance to land complete at Aandalnes, but it was short of equipment and medical supplies.

14. The 146<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance was part of the 49<sup>th</sup> (West Riding) Infantry Division. 'A' Company arrived at Aandalnes by 27 April as part of Sickle Force, while 'B' Company was deployed with Mauriceforce. It remained in the Aandalnes area until evacuated. 'A' Company, 158<sup>th</sup> Field Ambulance advanced with the 15<sup>th</sup> Infantry Brigade to Dombass, and withdrew with that brigade to Aandalnes for evacuation. The 36<sup>th</sup> Field Hygiene Section landed and was located at Aandalnes until evacuated.
15. These units were designated at Line of Communication troops, but were not landed in Norway and returned to the U.K..

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